

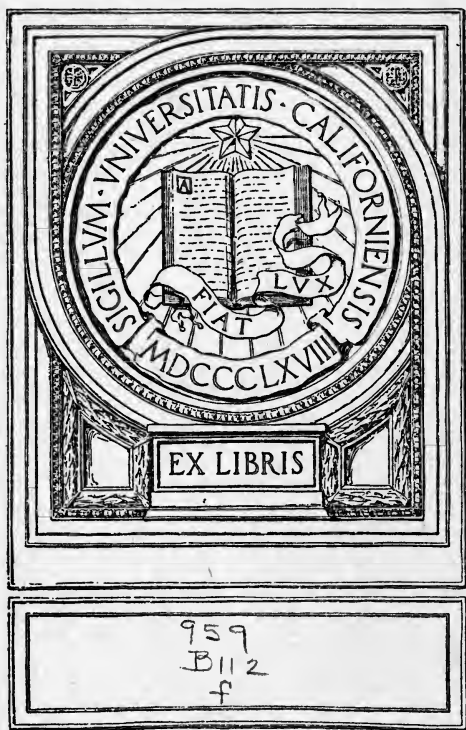
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THE FLYING PARLIAMENT
AND OTHER POEMS

The
Flying Parliament
and
Other Poems

By

EDWINA STANTON BABCOCK



NEW YORK
JAMES T. WHITE & CO.
1918

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE

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THE FLYING PARLIAMENT

THE SACRED SHIPS

*Out past the Highlands' smoke and Autumn gold,
The great gray ships on secret orders steam;
Battalioned boys their dawn-lit land behold
Drifting astern, like towers in a dream;
They watch the havened harbor lights that gleam
Speechless farewell, too tender to be told—
Until within their breasts austere and bold,
The former days remote and alien seem,
And they, the fathers of a Day supreme.
Thus, visioning their service—to a man—
They grim in their stern blitheness, sail to War.
Yea, while we sleep, in one night's star-lit span—
Youth leaves our shores—to face the Minotaur.*



THE FLYING PARLIAMENT

Scene. Venice, November, 1917. The piazza of San Marco.

A chill air emphasizes the weather stains on arcade and collonade. Now and then the pale sunlight glitters faintly on a bit of mosaic, but the lacy fretwork of St. Marks and the Palazzo Guistizia are nearly covered by sandbags and scaffoldings. The statues are all removed from their pedestals. The four famous bronze horses are once more removed; also the giants on the famous clock tower. The winged lion of St. Mark and the little St. Theodore and his crocodile have been carried to places of safety. From the bronze flagstaffs in the Piazza of St. Marks the Italian flags are flying. From afar off there comes the slow booming of guns. Suddenly the piazza is a whirl with pigeons. The guns sound like huge bass chords; the pigeon wings beat a curious suggestion of delicate pastoral themes. The canals are deserted except for one gondola slowly approaching a bridge. An American war correspondent wields the great oar unaccustomedly. The American steps out at a bridge; he makes fast the gondola; he walks slowly into the deserted piazza. Near the bronze base of the flagstaffs is a single child standing among the whirling pigeons. The child has a small bit of black bread in his hand; now and then he breaks off a tiny bit of the bread and throws it to the birds who come eagerly to him.

Child looking at pigeons circling in the sky speaks as
though to them:

*Fly—Fly! Where?
In the unlibertied air!
Wings of gray instinct,
All opal tinct,
Pulses of pleasure,
Feathery measure—
Wings of delicate vibrant life,
Cutting blue air with halcyon knife;
Sky-strewn garlands of pleasant days,
No more your turret and tower ways!
Nowhere—nowhere
Do hearers your sweet counsels share!
Nowhere—nowhere
Is your place in the militant air!*

The American advances slowly; he is clad in khaki, and carries field glasses; his broad brimmed hat is worn down low over his eyes which, burned out and weary, are fixed on the Duomo of St. Marks.

As he notices the Italian flags, his lips close firmly together, and he looks down at the little American flag set in his button-hole. He stares around the deserted piazza and shivers. Taking out his notebook he sits down on the steps of the Duomo and commences writing:

(American, writing)

Here in the Piazza

Where the colonnades
Dripped with globules
Of colored beads,
Where delicate shapes
Of Venetian glass
Expanded like flowers
In cavelike booths;
Here where the band played strains,
Wild and rich and forlorn,
Till the very stars dropped down,
Like gold tears on the night;
And the moon, like an orbèd lyre,
Tried to echo the strain
Through strings of fine-drawn cloud. . . .
Here where the musing crowds
Sat in the coffee stalls
Of Florian's and drank
Tiny glasses of green
Or golden yellow Chartreuse;
In a sweet dazed waking dream—
Here is emptiness now,
Emptiness like a curse,
Emptiness like a house
With the light and life all gone;
All the loving turned to dread,
The children statues of Fear,
The windows closed and stark,
And the pictures turned to the wall,

The people are fled away
To Padua and the plains,
Because the Prussian comes.
All the men are on the lagoons,
With Latin passion and pride
Fighting the Prussians back;
But here in this empty place,
Thronged once by a brilliant world,
Stands a little Venetian child
Feeding the hungry doves.

Child, moving over near the American, curiously
watches him at his writing. At last the little one sits
soberly down beside the war correspondent, who smiles
at him but goes on rapidly scribbling his notes:

While up from the Lido's calm,
Where the yellow sails once sank
Into gold dusted sky;
Where the great green waves crashed on
The lilac shadowed sands,
Grey tides move like a dirge.
Young waters that once lapped
The dream-lanes of canals,
Where marble faces smiled
In shadows green as moss,
Now are wrinkled and old;
The morning-tinted shores
Are now brittle and old;

And here, where on festa days
The banners clasped the breeze,
And the tapestries rolled down
Over the galleries,
And the air-ships, like great beads,
Buoyed them on the sun
Floating over the roofs,
Those days, fanning with sails
And fairy trails of boats,
And somnolent dip of oars—
Those nights, fruited with lights
Spattered with gleam and gold—
All are ended and gone,
Blasted before the guns.
Venetian people are gone,
Fled to Bologna's plains,
Away from Piave's floods
To Padua's pallid walls.
The decadent boom of guns—
Sullen, brutish guns—
Tired, moody guns—
Sick, disillusioned guns—
Is all that comes to the ear.

The child, sitting placidly near the war correspondent, keeps on throwing the tiny crumbs of bread to the pigeons; the American looks at him absently, and then bends again to his writing:

Glutted are all the guns,
Glutted with fiendish drink
Of hot young human blood ;
Brutal ennuyeux ! Fat
With soft delicious food
Brought them from every land.
Now the very guns are shamed ;
The hideous tanks are shamed ;
The fields and mountains are shamed ;
The Zeppelins are shamed ;
The submarines are shamed ;
Men's faces are set and stern
With an solemn awful shame.
The world turns from its trough,
And knows its swinishness ;
The guns are glutted now,
Yet, if the flood be passed
On Piave's fertile plains,
Venice shall come to their maw ;
All the delicate high-bred bones
Of the Bride of the Seas will come
To be crunched by the wild-boar guns.
Venice the fragile, grey
Queen of the lamped lagoons—
Of slender lily tower—
Of rich dustcovered bronze—
Of history-crustcd stone—
Of luminous Christs and saints

And Gods of golden lands—
Of dreaming palace and port—
Of wingèd winy glass
And vine-hung water-gate—
Venice must go to the guns.

The war correspondent closes his book; getting wearily to his feet he walks around the corner of the Palazzo Giutsizia and gazes out on the Grand Canal toward the lagoons. He turns and looks sorrowfully toward the Bridge of Sighs, to the restored Campanile and the Procurate Nuova. The grey pigeons whirl around him; the child follows him.

Child looking earnestly at the American, points to the doves:

(Child, singing:)

*There go the doves, the flowers of the water—
Leaves of the steeples and seed of the sea;
They know never our commerce nor barter,
Yet the doves are no longer free.
All of their flight among starry steeples
Fanning of wings over militant peoples,
Brings us no harmony.
Yet the work of the pigeons is not done,
For the work of wings is never done.*

American looking down at the child wonderingly:

The work of wings is never done.
That, me-thinks, is a wise small song.
Who gave it you to sing?

The child stands gazing up at the American; he keeps mysterious dark eyes fixed upon him answering solemnly:

The Woodcarver,—he sings
A song of many lines
And all about the doves.
“Pigeons,” he sings, “are wise
They know their way so well,
For they mark it out by stars
And spiral paths of air;
They know their way so well,
And their way is always home
To quietness and peace—

The child, keeping his eyes gravely fastened on the war correspondent, chants with a wierd insistence:

*The Woodcarver, he knows
The meaning of everything;
What makes the flowers grow,
What makes the bright stars fall,
What makes the echoes stay
After the priests' intoning,
And boom around the walls
Of our cathedral there.
He says to keep on watching
The doves with soaring wings,
The peaceful, happy doves,
For they have a message for men—
Feverish, stupid men*

*Who are caught in a tangling net
Of their own imaginings.*

The American looks puzzled, he puts his hand on the child's head and searches the large mournful eyes; he mutters something under his breath, and shakes his head sadly.

American caressing the child's hair:

Your city is lonely, Child.
Are you the only thing
That lives—comes out to the sun?
Do the Venetians hide
In cellars and in tombs—
They who were made of sun?
The palaces are closed,
The gondolas are gone,
But your people—all the play
Of their merry liquid eyes,
The white of their perfect teeth,
The olive glow of their skins,
And their saucy ragged ways;
The dark faced coral women,
The laughing lacemakers,
The choruses clamoring
Under the bobbing lanterns
At night on the canals—
Are they sleeping a happy sleep?
A long siesta-hour?

(Ah! that seista-hour,
It has grown very long
For many Italian youths.)
Where have the people gone?

The child, slipping from under the war correspondent's
hand, looks away from him up to the pigeons that stream
in circles around them, saying simply:

There is no one left here now
But the Woodcarver and me.
The Woodcarver makes saints
And angels young and sweet;
They poise all over his shop,
They smile at us from the walls,
We sit with the angels there
And eat the bitter bread
The Woodcarver has saved;
Though the guns go snarling on,
We are not much afraid;
We stay to guard the doves.
The Woodcarver has said
They watch over Venice,
So we watch over them.

American to himself:

A child and an old Italian
Who carves his dreams in wood
And "is not much afraid,"

All that is left in Venice,
To stay and guard the doves.

The child regarding the war correspondent curiously:

Stranger, why do you come?
Venice is ugly now;
The strangers come no more—
Only the officers come
With charts and clanging boots;
Their talk is swift and stern,
Their eyes are burned like yours,
And no-one ever smiles.
Signori used to come;
My father rowed them around;
They laughed and sang and threw
Money in the canal,
As the Doges once threw rings.
The kind merry strangers!
They loved the bobbing lanterns,
The songs on the water-ways,
And the black gondolas swaying. . . .
They were Americans
And English; yes, and French—
But always Americans,
Always feeding the doves,
Always caressing the doves,
Always protecting the doves!

War correspondent sombrely:

Yes—we used to feed the doves;
Now we are feeding guns.

The child, his eyes fixed upon the birds, breaks again into song:

*All on the sunset evening,
In the cortile's peace,
The soft grey doves came streaming
In ecstasied release;
Doves on my mother's head
As she walked abroad with her laces,
Doves near the baby's bed,
Doves in the window places,
Doves fanning the cornices there,
Doves flooding, rippling the square,
Cooing and preening and circling where
The fountain sprayed on its Graces—
Purple breasted graylings that fly
Into the blue tranquillity.
Now it seems they have no sky.
Bombs and smoke and horrors hover . . .
The day of wings and soaring is over.*

The American, half smiling at the child's fantastic quality—half angry at his pathos:

Why! Look you, the peace of a dove
Were a witless, silly thing!

Your doves there have their quarrels.
Notice that down-charged wing!
Hear that fretting and quarreling cooing
Trouble among the pigeons brewing!

The war correspondent laughs at his own impatience,
then takes the child's hand, stroking it tenderly and
saying:

Now the peace of a dove
Is sent into the world
On stronger enduring wings—
The peace of a mighty world,
Rises on sturdier wings.
The doves must rest awhile;
The sky is filling now
With wings of a mightier make.
What of the flying planes,
The noble charging planes,
The squadrons of flying planes,
Sweeping the fields of sky,
Hovering over the earth?
That is the new Parliament.
The wingèd Parliament,
The true Parliament,
Which comes to bring us peace.
Watch in the vault of heaven
Where soaring birdmen fly—
On a splendid errantry,
The Parliament of Peace!

The child smiles doubtfully; but the tenderness in the war correspondent's voice gains his confidence; he slips his hand into the stranger's, saying almost gayly:

You talk like the Woodcarver,
A wonderful talk of wings.
Oh! come and see the Woodcarver,
And hear his wonderful things,
The way he reads the message
This dreadful war-time brings.

The two cross the deserted piazza toward the *cálles* where there are many little shops and booths now all boarded up; one, however, remains open. It is a small, dark, dingy cave, with small wooden angels, beautifully carved, festooned over the doorway. As one peers into the dimness of the interior, one has the sense of the fluttering of delicate carved wings. The Woodcarver comes to the door; he has in one hand his chisel, in the other a shapeless block of olive wood. The Woodcarver is old and bowed, but as he lifts his cavernous, dark eyes he smiles, and his whole face is irradiated with a look of the genius of simplicity.

Woodcarver to the war correspondent:

Bon Giorno. Ah, Signore!
Welcome forestiere!
Strangers are good to see.
It is like those other days,

When they drifted over the square
Like scattered, unstrung beads,
Or corn flung to the doves—
Or stood in the twilight churches,
Staring through the incense,
Hearing the organ roll,
And priests voice imploring
The Virgin's intercession.

American, placing his hand on the old man's arm:

'Tis good to find someone here,
Only officials greet me
Along the shivering streets.
Where are the people of Venice?
The lazy and happy and motley?
The vendors and hawkers and idlers?
The shop keepers and glass blowers?
The courtly bankers and merchants?
Ah! it is lonely in Venice.

Woodcarver, his cracked voice faltering:

All fled to ancient Padua,
To the Good St. Anthony.
And we—we only stay
To watch the doves—and pray.

American, looking wistfully about him:

And when the doves fly off—
Rather than meet Teutons,
In their compelling drive?

Woodcarver fiercely:

The doves will never leave;
St. Mark has willed it so.
'Tis they who must not leave;
If they leave Venice will fall.
'Tis for that I stay behind,
I and the little child,
To feed and sooth the doves.
And you—how come you here?
You must have been in the field—

Glancing up eagerly at the war correspondent:

Tell us—how fare our armies?

American solemnly and reluctantly:

Cadorna has retreated
Before the Teutonic drive.
They have unloosed the Piave;
The Germans cannot cross,
But the sacrifice was dear.
They have unloosed the Piave
To keep the Prussian back.
Cadorna has been routed;
Italians have retreated.

The Woodcarver stand there, looks at the war correspondent for a dazed moment, then jumps suddenly at him snarling into his very face:

Retreat—that is a lie!

The old man looks wildly about him, grasping at the American's shoulder, and slightly shaking him, sobbing querelously:

What a silly childish tale
To tell a Venetian ear!
The Colleoni armed,
Astride his savage horse
In the Campello there—
A Mercenary, yet,
Filled with Italian pride,
Would fling you back on your words—
Your coward, lying words.
For Italy, retreat?
For Latin blood—retreat?
Was any retreat for France?
For Belgium any retreat?
Another stand perhaps,
Another flash of the eyes,
Another gritting of teeth,
Another steeling of heart,
Another bracing of flesh,
Another surge of the blood,
Another smell of the fray,

Then hell to the weltering hog
That plunges forth on our land,
Gnashing his filthy tusks!
Gas and fire and cold,
Water and steel and smoke,
Roaring fires of hell,
Vermin, disease and wounds
Against them—Latin blood!
Oh! that I had wells of it,
I, a bloodless man,
Faltering—old, and weak,
But I mind me how once it burned—
Fire, blazing and quick—
Floods, scarlet and hot—
Flowers, passionate sweet—
Spirit, dauntless and bold—
Instinct, sure and keen—
Supremest Latin blood!

The old man paused, breathless and trembling; his hand drops weakly from the war correspondent's shoulder; he draws himself up, saying with gentle dignity:

I lose my manners, Sir;
But you will see the truth.
Our life lies in the folds
Of the sweeping allied flags.
We are made of Latin blood,
Blood on whose rising tide

Rides the ark of ideals,
Instincts of Liberty—
Freedom's flowering stars.
Yea—I have Latin blood;
For me there is no retreat.

The American, silent and touched, looks quietly at him; there is sympathy and understanding in his face, yet he remains coolly reflective. The old Woodcarver staggers to his stool, and begins fiercely cutting at the shapeless block of wood. All about the small cavelike shop the sun strikes the smooth glistening bodies of wooden angels, the golden brown nakedness of little cherubs.

The American also sitting down rolls and lights a cigarette, the child collecting shavings and bits of wood from the floor, sits in the doorway sorting them and arranging them in patterns.

The American quietly inhaling his cigarette:

Your city is very drear.
The houses closed and blind;
The opal waters grown dun
With the muddied silt that comes
From the Piave's plains.
You carve while the cannon booms;
Under your knife there grows
A figure, supple-soft,
Springing from uncouth wood,
And you give it branching wings,

And fashion its gentle face
As though there were angels still. . . .
You go on making angels.
Do the angels know, think you,
Of all the passion and hate,
And waste and cursing and lies,
And pride and fierce world-strife,
Back of the making of wars?
These angels, do they preen
Their wings over it all,
And smile upon us men?

The old Woodcarver for a moment drops his head;
he passes his hand across anguished eyes; then he points
to the child sitting in the doorstep, and puts his finger
on his lip.

Woodcarver, fiercely:

Hush! It is to calm
His timid, childish thought.
The poor Bambino believes
These angels will keep him safe.
It is to keep serene
The thoughts 'neath his innocent curls,
That I go on carving angels.

American, bitterly:

Yes—only I have been
Down in Servia,

On Armenian plains.
In blasted fields of France,
In England's wooded ways.
Seeing many little forms,
The angels forgot to save.

The Woodcarver stops carving; he drops his head into his hand; the American bites his lips, and curses himself. With sombre eyes he stares at the floor. Suddenly he notices a bit of wood lying in the shavings at his feet. It is a half-carved cross. The war correspondent, picking it up holds it loosely in his hand, ruminating. At last he puts it very gently on the table near the Woodcarver's listless arm, and turns to the door, staring out to the grey vistas of the empty calles. As he smokes in silence the far-off guns boom steadily, and the whirl of grey pigeons comes once more past the little shop into the piazza.

The child, looking up at them, chants dreamily:

*Laws of humanity hold them
Safe for the sunlit feeding,
Protected always, and heeding
Laws of the place that enrolled them;
Spiral their flights, midst the steeples
Pinnacles and Campanile;
Silver fanfare of wings,
Soothing the thoughts of the peoples.
They spell Humanity, Love,*

*Tenderness, Peace—But the air
Is rent with wild thunder—Despair . . .
Where is the end of it? Where?*

The Woodcarver, lifting his face from his hands, looks anxiously at the child; he passes his rough hand swiftly over his eyes and smiles. Rising he pats the little shoulder of the child sitting in the doorway, saying laughingly:

Why their's is a small Parliament.
Peace to their soaring counsels!
Weaving strange laws,
Making a Cause
For the new born nations.
Note how they fly,
Tieing the sky,
Looping the heavens,
Wreathing the square,
Binding blue air
Into golden-garlanded sheaves!
There are the glad manoeuvres,
The shiftings and the shaping,
The mist and the cloud-escaping.
Higher they fly and higher,
Looping their winged desire,
While we stand down here gaping.

The Woodcarver stands by the child, tapping his shoul-

der gently, and with the other hand pointing out the difference in pigeon flight.

Woodcarver explaining whimsically:

There are the Ones, the Twos and the Threes,
The ablest, sagest counsellors, these. . . .
The Threes soar higher than most,
The Twos have a most responsible post,
And the Ones—Oh! the separate lonely Ones—
Dreamers and Hopers and Prayers, the Ones!
Stretching their wings over the world,
Wavering over Humanity, hurled
Man against man, gun against gun,
Waiting until the madness be done. . . .
Further and Further away from dust,
Higher and Higher and Higher and Higher,
Every separate, keen-eyed flier,
Their's is the flight of trust!

The Woodcarver turns shamefacedly back to the American, who smiles understanding his little diversion.

American—You speak quaintly, in childish parlance; but I like the fancy. What was your drollery about those who fly singly?

The Woodcarver, his dark eyes lighting with imagination, stands before the stranger arms akimbo, explaining,—

Woodcarver shyly:

Why! Look you! I am a man
Without kith nor kin;

No wife, nor any child
But this adopted one,
Whose parents fled away,
And left him homeless here.
And it seems to me that I dwell
Closer to mine own heart,
Where many counsels come,
Than if a woman plunged
Her fingers in my brain,
And mixed my reason up.

The war correspondent laughs heartily at this, but the Woodcarver is quite serious. The old man stands slightly bent in the centre of the little place, regarding the stranger intently, and says slowly and gravely:

The lonely people know
Much that is shut away
From those that go in crowds,
Companioned all the time.
And look you—when the mass
Of human beings act,
'Tis on the thought of those
Who sit high up, alone,
Studying the Stars;
Or sit low down, alone,
Studying the Sands;
Or middle way, alone
Studying the Times.

The American, drawing on the last bit of his cigarette,
looks through the light cloud of smoke, and nods smiling.

The Woodcarver:

And the pigeons all alone,
Circling the dreamy domes
Of the Salute, there. . . .
Why! look you! They fly so high,
That earth-eyes cannot see;
They lose all sight of lands;
They feel the boundless air—
Air of the universe;
And the little plans of men,
And the little lands of men,
Like stupid little maps,
Like little colored charts,
Spread out under their wings
So little and so brief. . . .
Each nation for itself,
Each mortal for himself,
All working different ways,
Striving against each other,
Pulling away from each other,
Until some great Snarl comes,
And all are choked to death
By the tangle in their hands,
And the tangle in their minds.

The birds feel boundless air—

Air of the Universe,
Air of unbounded Life,
Freedom and liberty;
They see the first faint dawn
Of a Boundless Peoples' soul,
Freed for a mighty world—
World-Race, World-Life, World-God.
And on the sun-pathed clouds,
That toss like high white seas,
The dauntless birds fly out,
Out to a rimless Space,
Out to the path of Worlds,
And the solemn ways of stars,
Where they glimpse God himself;
And like a precious message,
Heaven-indicated sign
Under their small sweet wings,
They hold our dream for us.

Then we take to the air. . . .
Battalioned aeroplanes,
Squadrons of flying men,
Winged holy priests,
Winged lawyers and doctors,
Winged men and women,
Flying up from the earth
Into pure unmeasured air,
Where not a house can pry

With narrow stupid eyes,
And cramping stifling roof;
Where not a printed word
Sprays poison of old thought
Over the sky-cleansed Mind.
Where the clean squadrons fly,
Like soaring splendid birds,
Comes knowledge and buoyancy.
There is the liberty,
The freedom and the power,
Prescience and omniscience,
The Vision and the gift
And the prophecy of birds.

The American, tossing away the stub of cigarette,
reflectively surveys the speaker.

American:

Strange how he talks,
This old Venetian man,
This Carver of Wood-angels,
Seeing the glorious planes
Charging over the world!
A child-like, passionate theme.
Strange how the Carver talks!—
So talked the flying men,
Victor Chapman himself,
Dark as a gypsy prince,
With mind so just and stern,

Exact and science-full;
Chapman, adventurer,
Into the enemy lines,
Gallant plane-fighter,
Bronze plume-spreader,
Wild wing-worker—
Once said a thing like that.
Pegoud, though such a man
Through all his fighting fame,
And such a soldier, too,
With duty in his eyes,
France alight in his face,
His body like a tool,
The spirit used and kept
Light and sharp as steel
To be used for the piercing of air,
Like lance darting at fate—
In one of his laughing moods
Pegoud said things like that. . . .
Like eagles in their hoods,
Poised on their swooping planes,
The aviators know
Things not far off from that.
The solemn flying men,
The spear-eyed avions,
Whose radiant, soaring wings
Gild the blue summer air,
Who take the surf of clouds,

And thread the net of stars,
Emerging into Space,
Keen for new reckonings—
New delicate balancings,
Keen for new sciences
And new far beckonings.
They break all barriers,
Sweep all boundaries,
Surmount all mountains,
And soaring over seas
That have for countless years
Ensnared the minds of men
To barter and piracy—
They give the new air-path
To Peace and the interchange
Of mutual benefits.
Chapman, Pegoud, Gunymener—
They all said things like that,
They were too busy killing,
To make the thing come true;
(And others were busy killing
Chapman and Pegoud,)
So their soarings ended soon,
They folded their wings and slept. . . .
But from their Grand Parliament,
Their high and scatheless Parliament,
Their steep-ascending Parliament,
Senate of silver wings,

Pageant of balanced Thought,
Aerial conference,
Congress of flying men,
And forward flying minds—
Come many, many thoughts
And many many dreams
And thrilling glorious hopes. . . .
Thus, all that battle now,
All that struggle now,
And all that are dying now,
All that are starving now,
Do so smiling and strong,
Do so happy and sure,
Knowing that this age stands
On supremest level of all—
Highest peak of man's mind,
That dares his nature down,
Fastens his blood in leash,
Refines his passion, until
It calms under his hand,
And goes to *war with War*.

There is a sudden tremendous sound of guns. The child flings himself on the floor in fear; he crosses himself and lies there looking pitifully up to the walls where the wooden angels poise. The Woodcarver stops his work, and regards the child with a drawn white face.

Woodcarver, shuddering:

Christos!—A bitter sea,
That booming sea of guns.
Yet men dare to swim through
The Surf of mitrailleuse,
The solemn tides of blood,
The still, white foam of fear,
The cold blank sands of death. . . .
Yea, men dive into it,
Men swim into it,
Forging beyond its depths
To Something seen ahead,
Until their feet touch shore.
Oh! that the shore they touch
Would be the coasts of Peace!

American bitterly:

Still the guns boom and boom
Over the minds of men,
Drowning the wills of men,
The thinking powers of men.
So they boomed in the days
When the Fallieri fought,
When Colleoni took
The desperate cities' pay,
When the Hohenstauffen clutched
Italy's throbbing heart,
When wily Metternich
Closed up the mouths of men

And universities.
The black gluttoned guns
Boomed for Garibaldi,
And for Gambetta's cause.
For that Napoleon,
Who dickered in big wars—
With the great solemn head
And little pompous frame
And cold and martial eye
And strange abnormal dream.

The whole world loathed the sound
Of the sea of Mittrailleuse,
The roaring cannon-waves.
Yet on the swimmers came,
And dove through the frightful Surf,
Until whole millions lay
Like dead fish in that sea,
That broke in barren waves
Upon posterity.
So shall the millions die
In this chartless blasting Sea,
Till someone finds its Source—
The Power in Berlin,
And binds his pilfering hands,
And heals his crazy brain,
And ends his Mania. . . .
Till someone leads the world

In a new solemn Vow
And endless chanting hymn,
A vow such as this—

A vow that every race
And every blood shall sign
And seal with the memory
Of children who have died,
Of torment and of fright;
Of Women who have died,
Bearing the children of rape;
Of Men who gave their lives,
Fighting the filthy wars,
Of commerce and of greed;
Under so high a word,
So clean and pure a word
As Patriotic faith!
A vow that shall be sealed
By the whole world, rising
Requiring this one Thing,
Saying—"And with Him go
The marshalled powers of killing,
With him go out the Guns,
With us come in the Wings;
Bearing us on our Thought
The kingdoms of our Mind
And wisdoms of our Soul!

As the American finished, the Woodcarver looks shrewdly up from his work:

Is that how America talks?
How is it in your land?
Your people bright and gay
And full of sprightliness.
The keenness of their face,
The quickness of their mind,
And their slowness to all passion. . . .
Their big ambitions, and
Their proud impulsiveness. . . .
America, fine and free,
What does she think of guns
And working out a thought
With a massed artillery?

The American, lighting another cigarette ruminatingly regards it, and the old Italian smiling shakes his head and poises a half shaped figure of Christ in his hand, saying:

Nay, Nay! She does not know
Your land of tapering towers
And groves of shining lights,
The women light of foot,
Men white-haired but young-faced.
Your land knows not the guns,
Your land sends ships and men
Fuel, clothes, machines

And gold, and curing
Of medicines, and stuffs;
Every device of strength,
All scientific ways,
To heal and mend and save.
Yet your land does not know
The devastating hell
Of war, and war for War—
The hells that took the bloom
From off the women's faces,
And blasted children's minds
In every other land.
Your country does not know
Pray heaven she shall not know!

With a groan, the Woodcarver once more takes up the Christ, he runs his skilful sensitive fingers and supple wrist along the thin side of the young crucified figure. The American lost in thought staring at him. At last the latter as if speaking to himself thinks aloud, says softly:

"Our land sends ship and men,
The youth of the country's loins,
The precious toll of her towns,
The noble gift of her hills;
Men who were born to peace,
Who curse vile trickeries
Of hateful modern war;

Who trusted with smiling face,
A certain honesty,
And could not fathom hate,
And could not relish greed.
Ship after ship has sailed
To carry them to their graves,
The smiling sacrifice
Of this despairing age."

The Woodcarver looks up, in a kind of awe, as the
American relates:

They sail out on the night,
The young unhardened boys,
Whispering goodbye
To headlands and to Home,
To sweetheart and to wife,
With lips of passionate youth—
Set to a priestly task
Of waging *war on War*.
On stranger foreign soil
They laugh in sordid tents,
Go down into the trench,
Or Sail the gallant air,
Making their *war on War*.
Yea, the world might once have said
That we were long in peace.
No longer can it say
America knows not war.

The American, after brooding upon the idea, takes up his argument more earnestly, continuing:

America does not know?
I think we know too well,
I think we know at last.
Not with the passion that bursts
From the brave tormented heart
At sight of French fields torn
And orchards murdered down;
Not with the doomed despair
Of Servia, race-extinct,
Watching the women and girls,
Packed like frightened beasts
Herded, in slavish fear
Of many shames and deaths,
Looking back to the hills
Where the bodies of murdered men
Spell the End of the Race.
Not with the frightful sense
Of tangled pride and lies,
And great undisciplines
Of Russia's wolving hordes.
Not with that English heart
That bears its burden dumb,
And puts its sorrow by,
And keeps its firm face fixed
Toward its solemn duty, dumb

Against outside attacks,
Dumb under awful grief,
Dumb under bitter trial,
But with a knowledge strong
Of the Faith that comes with death
And with the Duty born
Of a perfect fearlessness. . . .
Not with passions like these
America goes to the Test,
But with new Law in her eyes
And a new Dream in her heart—
Dying into her birth. *

The Woodcarver drops his work. He folds his arms among the shavings on the table, and leans his head on them staring at the war correspondent, who sits shoulder dropped, knees wide apart, smoking thoughtfully, continuing:

America knows not War,
As a lasting principle.
But knows that War must be,
Till the Germ of War be killed.
Now that the way is seen,
America comes forth,
Makes that her battle-cry.
We care for that, as we care
For honesty in the eyes
Of the children of our race,

For fairness, squareness, right;
The way we care for a road,
That loops up through the hills
Of our Rocky Mountain peaks,
For a finely poised machine,
For a finely written tale,
For a deed done with despatch
And sureness and brevity.
We care for it, as we care
For a plunge in a mountain lake,
The smell of the woodland trail,
The secret of purple tides,
The science of charted stars.
My country has a dream,
The dream of equal rights,
The dream of a greater self,
Merging of Bignesses,
Of Progress, Land and Men.
The conquest of all fear
For ourselves and for other men.
My country cares for Peace;
My country dies for Peace.
But we care like the surgeon, who
Hand steady and eyes set stern,
Cuts without thought of shame
Or pity or silly fears,
Till the gangrene is excised;
Cuts the dead flesh away

And sees new healing powers
New vigors and new healths.
My country comes to yours,
To all the ailing lands,
And stands with face strong set,
Jaws firm, eyes straight ahead,
To do this surgery,
And keep itself more clean
To operate success,
And know no poisoning.
And, as the surgeon holds
His body and muscles hard,
His hands firm and true,
As a mother's with a child,
And his eyes clear and kind—
So must we keep ourselves
Strong for our mighty work;
No poison of Greed and Self,
No poisons of class and caste,
But our hands tender and strong,
Our eyes tender and cool,
Our words humble and true,
Our hearts—God help us!—pure.

As the American finishes, the child rushes, in wild excitement, crying:

"Master—O Master, there is a soldier come down from the front—one of the Bersagliere—from the floods of the

Piave. He found a boat, and, with his one poor hand, he has rowed it down the lagoons. The boat is full of blood. His side—his eyes are bleeding—O Master—Master!" There is a startled whir of the pigeons flying past, as a man's steps are heard dragging themselves over the stone pavement of the Calla. The child stands petrified at sight of the wounded soldier, covered with mud and blood, yet still wearing the dragged beaver hat with coque feathers, the long yellow gaiters and torn blue coat. He staggers in, makes the sign of the cross to the winged figures all about him, and sinks coughing on a bench. His head drops forward. The old Woodcarver falls on his knees before him, takes off his hat, and peers into his face. The American bends over him, takes a flask from his hip pocket, and pouring some of the contents on his handkerchief, puts it between the man's shaking lips.

Woodcarver with horror:

"Holy Virgin, protect us!
'Tis Pietro! the Gondolier,
Whose song was merriest
On all the moving canals;
Whose cry soared over the housetops
And dreaming palaces
Like a chain of golden moons.
He was a supple figure,
Leaning upon his oar,

With his scarlet sash and his cap,
And the saucy black on his lip,
A merry scalawag.
Virgin! but he has grown
Older than any world;
Older than anything
Dug out of a month's old grave,
And set to live again.

The Bersagliere sits panting, his eyes roll around the shop vacantly and wildly. Suddenly his glance falls on the half finished wooden Christ lying on the table. He struggles up, clutches it, and presses it to his lips. His hands close over it, his bleeding face breaks into pitiful sobs, and he moans like an animal.

The American, turning his head away, bites his lips muttering:

"Their Christ—Their Christ.
They will all die for him;
But Ah! it takes anguish,
Anguish of many kinds,
To make us humble enough
To make us wise enough
To try to *live* for him."

The war correspondent leaves the flask in the hands of the Woodcarver, who hangs over his friend like a woman, taking off the hat, smoothing the battered coque feathers, stroking the hair back from the bleeding brow.

He pours water out of a flask, and bathes the grey shaking face; he finally draws a very small fragment of his black bread from his breast, and, with a strange passionate gesture of renunciation, offers it to the soldier, who wolfishly snatches, and quickly devours it. He groans with his eyes closed, then looks appealing up at the Christ in the Woodcarver's hand, and crosses himself.

The Woodcarver in a low tone to the American:

It is like the Sacrament.

The American: It is like—— It is like—— The war correspondent breaks off suddenly; he flings himself to the door clenching his hand. The child runs to him, beckoning and pointing to sky.

Overhead, far above the buildings, flies a squadron of airplanes. They are bronze, gold and silver in the sunlight. The correspondent looking at them with his field glasses, can distinguish them as Austrian planes. They drop no bombs. As they pass the war correspondent looks back over his shoulder at the Woodcarver—

War correspondent:

They drop no bombs on Venice,
Do they treasure beauty still?
So that they are loath to crush?

The Woodcarver:

They fly superbly and strong.

The American:

'Tis a short, glancing, fatal life, yet imperial as a
God's.

The Bersagliere, savagely:

"Well? Do they attack? Hell to their insolence!

The child:

Oh! but see our pigeons fly with them!

The American:

Like the shadows of their souls.

The Woodcarver, somberly with mystic emphasis:

The planes are companied always
By the souls of the young dead fliers,
The air-men who have died,
Not knowing victory,
Who cannot rest in graves,
But still ride on the air,
Asking, How will it end?

The Woodcarver is still staring up into the sky. The
child steals up to him, and slips his hand in his.

Woodcarver in a sort of chant to the child:

Yea, in the fair blue air,
In the silken glass-blown air,
Full of its flowery forms,
Or un-embodied souls,

These disembodied fly—
Asking, *How will it end?*
Myriad wonders soar,
Fly with our flying hordes,
The flying hordes of our foe,
Asking, *How will it end?*
Youth with a smile on its lips,
Youth with untired powers,
Youth with its gallant need
Of dying for a belief.
Now Youth flies forward,
Softly on lucid air,
Lifting our earth-faces,
Guiding our feet that walk
In the old stubborn ways,
Calling us to the air,
Asking, *How does it end?*

What is the gain, asks Youth,
That we died and never grudged
Our generous young death,
Unless you learn the Word,
And learn that Nothing is,
Nothing can ever be,
Until men turn them to
Their labors for a thing
That shall be greater far
Than any gain of war?

Dead youth with untired powers—
Defeated of its life,
And life it could have given—
Hangs on surrounding air,
And tries to speak the Word,
The new, all-languaged Word
By which shall come release
From the Torture of the World,
The Battle cry of . . . Peace!

They all cluster around the doorway watching the
marvelous evolutions of the airplanes. The pigeons soar
under them, and the child for the first time smiles—

The child, quaintly:

The birds taught them to fly.
Will the sweet birds teach them peace?

American smiling, rumpling the child's hair tenderly:

The scientists say, little one,
That a bird develops far
Beyond man's imperfection.
Who knows what we can learn,
Now that we, too, have wings?

He turns to the Woodcarver pointing to the pigeons:

I mind me of one spring morning,
When first I saw them whirl
In their Winged Parliament;

'Twas May, and Venice was bridal.

Bridal she always was,

The fragile, aged city

That keeps beauty within

Her shadowy tragic heart.

'Twas May and Venice was bridal.

Golden light on the housetops,

Limpid green on the water;

Palaces gleamed and thrilled,

Pallidly swimming and breaking

Into a lovely destruction,

At every passing of oars

Along their circling mirror.

The American, a look of ineffable regret on his face,
recapitulates the beauty of Venice:

Ripples on white steps breaking,

Wistaria over the doorways,

A bright bird high in a window,

Carved heads on colonnades,

Musing statues smiling

Through the tangles of a vine.

In a hundred broken trances,

A thousand flickering candles,

In glooms of the sanctuary

And burst of the priests strong song,

In processions of Corpus Christi;

A thousand broken reflections,

Sweet cries of melon vendors,
Swish of oars and of barges;
A scented warmth with the plashing
Of sinuous gondolas,
Black and gold on the color,
Fastened at the traghetto
Lolling on freshening tides,
White was the Della Salute,
Bubbling with many towers,
On the fluttering Guidecca,
Bright with its tatters and patches,
The solemn Redentore.
On the ancient hooded Rialto
Merchants clamoring still;
On the shifting Schiavoni,
Fluttering tourists and children,
Eager, impressed and caught
In enchantment older than love.
Venice the aged queen,
Took them upon her knees,
And showed them her fabulous book
Of melting picture-dreams,
Of saints and gods and kings,
Of martyrs, Doges, and Popes,
Of painters and architects;
Told them her amorous tales
Of adventure and emprise,
Of sea-fogs covering deeds,
Strange and wicked and old,

Of gallants in muffling cloaks,
Of the lions' mouths in the square;
Told them her amorous tales,
Saying, "All ends in Beauty,"
And sent them out from her courts—
Whispering, "All ends in Beauty."

Venice in delicate age,
Beauty in power and age,
Age like frost on the grass,
Age like the age of the tree,
Like a fountain that never dries—
Such was Venice that morn—
And the doves over it all!

The American suddenly turns, and shakes his fist in the direction of the booming of the guns. He faces the other two men demanding tensely:

Rheims had beauty like that.
France had beauty like that.
Belgium had beauty like that.
What is the doom of the world?
What must our science teach?
What must religion work?
What is it men need to know,
Before beauty like this
Can be spared to the hungry world,
That needs to drink of the cup
Of Beauty for its life?

The Bersagliere looks up; the cut on his forehead

bleeds less freely but he holds his ragged handkerchief to it. As he speaks, he motions toward the unfinished Christ lying on the table—his voice a guttural whisper.

The Bersagliere:

Never the hungry world,
The desperate childish world,
The feeble stupid world,
Caught in its horrible webs,
Of stupid desires and needs,
Of pamperings and sloth,
Of pride and avarice,
Of class and snobbery;
Never the world can be saved
Until we look on this.

He reaches over, seizes the cross and embraces it, passionately continuing between moans:

In the trenches they say it,
In the hospitals know it.
Men have talked to each other,
Lying sobbing with pain
Under the misery
Of stabbing knives of cold.
Out under the stars,
Where the broken bodies lie
Of young men scattered stiff
In terrible postures of death;
Or sweet boys broken up

In ghastly pieces of death.
The broken whispers sob:
The body and blood of Christ.
"The body and blood of Christ,"
It has been broken again,
By all the simple people
The patient humble people;
A long communion table,
Stretching out through all lands.
The body and blood of Christ,
Given to us again
By these his ignorant men,
Who when they crashed to death
On mountain or on plain
Resigned their souls to Him.

The Bersagliere raises his arm to heaven 'as if registering a vow:

Nevermore will I take
The holy sacrament
But that my lips will say,
The bodies and blood of *men*
Never will I receive
The wafer on my lips
But after Christ's sweet name.
"Bodies and blood of *men!*"
Bitter will be the wine
Unless I murmur soft
"The bodies and blood of men

Who die, that He might live."

Woodcarver regarding the stricken soldier. Ah! what does this chaos mean?

The American bites his lips and clenches his hand. Finally he turns to where the cross lies on the table, takes it up reverently and curiously, and looks at it as at some new thing.

The American, reverently:

It means, a new-raised cross;
The simple things Christ knew,
And a Christ that has not died.

It means a new found self,
And a Soul that trusts itself.

It means a Mind that sees
Beyond race boundaries,
Beyond all Separates
Of race or land or kin;

One People that shall rise
Throughout the nationed globe,
And speak one solemn word
With all their various tongues,
There shall be no more War!

One People shall demand,
For the children still to be,
That Self shall be consumed
In the Passion *No more War.*

One Science dedicate
To a solemn World-emprise,
Spreading immortal health

Over the whole of life;
That engines be dedicate
To the good and help of the world;
That crops be dedicate
To the strength and life of the world;
That gold be dedicate
To the power and might of the world;
That Mind be dedicate
To the reverent Law of the World.

They all regard him in wonder, until the Woodcarver
demands,—

And what of race-pride?

Bersagliere:

And what of commerce?

Child:

And what of home and hearth?

The American:

I know not.

I know only,

All else is lost and fails.

I know new forces shape

Illimitable life

Out of infinite Mind.

He looks at the Bersagliere, touching him gently on
the shoulder, saying softly:

'Tis a long communion table;

We all kneel at that table.

It stretches through many lands,
It is spread in many minds.
How do we go from that table?
The bodies and blood of men
Must not be given in vain.

The American, turning to the Woodcarver, looks at him wistfully. He gestures to the winged figures all about, and says gravely and reverently:

Go on making angels!

The American, turning to the child, puts his arm around him, and together they stand at the door looking up at the whirling doves.

American gently:

Know'st thou, little one,
They be pigeons,
Who bear all tidings
Under their wings?
Over the borders
Listen, One day,
Winged *men* shall cross
All the borders
With messages under their wings.
And the Parliaments shall meet
To try their mighty wings
Of fresh and buoyant thought,
And the minds of men shall rise
To the cleanness of the skies,
And the way shall be made clear,

And your world be safe once more.
You shall see clouds of planes,
Soaring over your home
Bringing tidings of hope,
Dropping flowers on the graves
Of the everlasting Young,
Who died to further it.
Flocks of singing planes,
Voyaging over the air,
With singing men and women,
Chanting a paeon of peace,
So that your children's sons,
Their noble heritage,
Shall register and say
*"The warless days came in
With the winged flying men,
And the flying Parliaments
Brought to us lasting Peace."*

The American turns to the Woodcarver. He looks long and fixedly at him. At last he smiles wistfully, and points to the winged figures all about, saying soberly:

Go on making angels!

He makes a slight gesture of farewell, steps out of the door and into the piazza San Marco. Standing there he looks at the Italian flag, then at the small tricolor in his own button-hole. Smiling reverently and tenderly upon them, he stretches out his arms toward the sky, and with a gesture of passionate hope and appeal, salutes the Air.

"GONE WEST"

WEST Wind blowing from the far clime,
What seeds are you sowing for the New Time?

"Pollen of souls that died

In a young smiling pride,

Scattered of chivalry and world-dream sublime."

West Wind filling all the green trees,

What hope did they leave for us on our knees?

"Their happy, high Belief

To you they now bequeath—

Their vast, unconquered Sky bannered with breeze."

Bright Wind surging from the clean West,

What were they urging on their gay young quest?

"High Urge and keen,

That Life shall mean

Bold truths, faced with a bold broad breast."

West Wind blowing from their dim coasts,

Do they see weakness of all human boasts?

"Yes, but they know

That men still go

Forward and Forward in strong steady hosts."

West Wind, West Wind, what will they do

If we should fail them—should prove us untrue?

Fail them? That cannot be.

For all Eternity

Faith in World-Liberty

Joins them to You!

OTHER POEMS

THE HAPPY PEOPLE

"And as I sat, over the pale blue hills came a noise of revellers."—ENDYMION.

DOWN the spring slope sweep the Happy People
In a stream;
Pressing naked feet in rosy clover,
Flitting through the glades where songbirds hover,
Following brooks that run the meadows over;
(In my dream.)

Down the green lawns throng the Happy People,
Joy supreme
In their poised hands garlanded with flowers,
Joy of soft limbs fresh from sun and showers,
Joy of sweet lips tasting dewy hours;
(In my dream.)

Toward the mountains fare the Happy People,
And they seem
Waving me a promise bright and splendid,
Calling me to take the way they wended.
(But that way began—so has it ended
In my dream.)

FROM TREE CLOISTER

OUT of the city I came,
Heart aflame,
Thoughts oblique, confused, amazed;
My yester dreamings hurt and dazed
With the stifling buildings sweeping high
And the towers choking the dingy sky.
But I left it all to cross the dune,
Hand in hand with the crescent moon.

Out of the city I came,
Dreams of Fame
Dogged me up to my cottage walls,
Human passions and powers and thralls
Challenged the way I took
By the frozen meadow brook;
But the hill-top pasture bars
Chapelled the winter stars,
And their votive candles burned
At the gate wherein I turned.

Out of the city I came.
Father of endless name,
Who burn there burn on thy sacred pyre—
Burn with the flame of the heart's desire
Toward flame of worthier things,

Toward lifting of broader wings;
And their purple gift and their scarlet boon
I hang on my altars of winter noon.
I speak to the brook in its icy shrine,
Confess to the tall dark palmer pine,
And soft on the country air,
I breathe the cities' prayer.

FROM A WINDOW

THE ever-greens that line the road
Bow snowy heads upon the sight;
The netted horses draw the load
As it were light.

The living grief I would not see,
The hands in helpless quiet wrung;
But the white trappings say that she
Was fair and young.

The coaches blot the wintry scene
Passing where snow-blue shadows lurk. . . .
Youth, Life, Love, Death—what do they mean?
Back to my work!

BIRTHRIGHT

HOW have I lost them, the old powers of dream?
I used to float through life, as on expanse
Quivering with light, slow-moving in a trance
That bore me like a petal on its stream.

Now, mouth and eyes are filled with dust of life.
I, once a Seer, with my crystal globe,
Know now no sphere, no iridescent robe;
But bear me like a thief, with hand on knife.

How have I lost them, the old powers of dream?
I, who was so content with simple things—
With one bright Autumn leaf, wood murmurings,
The near-spun grass, or one star's far off gleam?

Now, I bear burdens with an ashen face.
I count my gains, I clamor at my loss;
I too have joined the tawdry pitch and toss,
Who once walked tranced, with illusioned pace.

Since they are dead to me, dear dreaming powers—
Dead, with their grail and magic, visions, wings—
I shall distil the attar sorrow brings,
And lave them in the sweet of their own hours.

I shall their delicate bright figures lay
Embalmed in gold, in so profound a rock,
That no sharp-featured pain shall find a way
To touch, and no smug knowledge come to mock.

TO A LONELY STAR

ONCE more we keep our tryst—I on the beach,
Brooding in milky tides of Autumn moon,
Watching the gold black water softly reach
And fill the hollows of grass silvered dune;
Till, far beyond the rim of a lagoon
I see Thee in thy calm ascension tread
A darkened way to thy cloud-cloistered rest;
Hanging thy maiden lantern in the West,
Where planet torches lie extinguishéd.

The world will never miss me when I go.
These gossip ripples in the sedges there
Will still be whispering of that Thing they know;
The moon's new milk will bathe the young and fair,
Nourishing Youth and Passion with such care.
But Thou, O Abbess Star! keep trimmed thy light,
Taking thy warder-way across the moor.
Yea, many a woman by her cottage door
Will need thy comfort all the lonely night.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

THERE comes the time when he who gathers grapes
Must find his vineyard in the city street,
Must press what wine he may from lobate shapes
And gobules clustered at his head and feet.
The press he treads will be the city night—
Bubble and bloom and burst of heady wine;
No fairer fresher grapes will meet his sight
Than pallid fruit of the electric vine!

There comes the time when he who longs for song
Must turn to monsters dreaming in the dark,
That Science-incubated aeons long;
Will give to music new heresiarch!
But Harmonies of pride and lust and doubt
Will greet the ear, that for some human hymn
Longs bitterly, hearing the brassy shout
Of engine songs, massive, superb and grim.

In those stark days new Lancelots shall pass
Accoutered black, with the bi-colored plume.
New Siegfrieds, armored in their steel and brass,
Shall flash subseas in tunnelled ocean gloom.
Woman and Science, gaunt with bold new brow,
Shall say what shall be born, what thing shall cry
Pioneer on its lurching, airdashed prow,
Air-immigrant to harbors of the sky.

There comes the day when on the sea of stars
Unspoken ships shall lay unsounded course,
And looming shapes, outside uncharted bars,
Shall dumbly signal with some speechless force.
New worlds shall stare on other worlds that be,
Sailing close by them on that starry sea,
And know that all the Main that round them rolls
Swells to new moons, new seas, new tides, new poles.

There comes the time, O patient Human heart,
O Brave Pathetic—time when thou must see
The old, the dear, the simple things depart,
Who canst not love the strange new things to be.
Yet by this New, shall not thy vision grow
To some estate, some altitude of range,
Where it is given thee that thou shalt know
What Changeless 'tis, that underlies all change?

THE TRAMP

THE ragged sun, the wind-filled sky,
The wet track and the empty car;
The night-hung woods, and, raised on high,
The lighted candle of a star.

So reads his heraldry, who prowls
On listless following of chance;
Who, sullenly appraising, scowls
On the rich dwelling's circumstance.

The cloud of smoke upon the hill,
The rag left on the highway's beat,
The light o'er a deserted sill—
These mark the passing of his feet.

No strenuous call of noontime bells
Vibrates through ether of his dreams;
For him no clock the hour tells;
For him no church's spire gleams.

Though from his thoughts undisciplined
To warehouse and to street averse,
He, in exchanges of his mind,
Diverts him with a lavish purse—

Diverts him with his social schemes,
His plan against the existing plot;
And what he, of his justice, deems
Would—justice practised—be his lot.

Of whence he comes, of where he goes—
These things no human record keeps.
What black unwritten deed he does,
What pure fair hope within him sleeps.

What strange mysterious power he wields,
What undeveloped force to sway,
None guess who see him cross the fields,
Or plodding on his stealthy way.

Only dead fires attest his life,
Only dumb trees his brothers stand;
He knows not home nor child, nor wife,
Nor friendly grasp of any hand,

Yet lays his scheme for daily food,
Yet keeps him keen for filching pence
For this . . . o'er pipe and fire to brood—
Spending imagined affluence!

IN THE STRANGE COUNTRY

I SPEAK your language very glibly now,
Have all the countersigns and know the range
Of all your boundaries; the streets I know. . . .
And yet, your land is strange.

You ask me whence I came? I cannot tell.
My Race? Ah! God forbid that you should see
Others like me,—in this land where you dwell—
Not such as we.

“Do you have news?” you ask. My heart contracts.
Do I have news? . . . Yea, messages do come,
As if I had made wistful, faithful pacts
With those . . . back home. . . .

This butterfly brought one, that errant vine
Conveys a Word; the Sea, it would seem, knows. . . .
Sweet tidings that I cannot quite divine
The flowers disclose.

But since you ask me idly, let me say,
I know not whence I am, nor why I come;
Yet I sit with you in your inn today
Devising speech—though dumb.

RAIN PICTURES

First Picture

MONOCHORD

THE soft rain falls; the willow trees
Throw silver tangle on the breeze,
While Robin tunes his pipe and blows
His joyance down the orchard-close.
Amid the spraying crystal notes
One iridescent bubble floats—
Bubble of music, that careens
Adown the pasture's mottled greens.
How tell the rapture that he sings
To beatings of his happy wings?
Why praise the story that he tells,
The message that his bosom swells . . . ?
Ah! he is Robin, and he goes,
Singing the only song he knows.

The sweet saps rise; the maple trees
Drink deep and scatter crimson lees.
I wander up and down the stream,
Singing the music of my dream;
Its cadence vague, its plaintive strain
Attunes it to the Harp of Rain;

The muted branches softly play
An obligato to my lay;

The drooping willows pluck the stream
With pensive touch that marks the theme,
And all the trilling water-tune
Accompanies my simple rune.

No heart have I to wáke the green
With joyous lilting loud and keen.
I tune no pipe for jaunty snatch
Like Robin's loud ecstatic catch.
I sing the song of wistful things,
Dumb longings, blind imaginings. . . .
And yet, why blame me that I stray,
Crooning so poor a rondelay?
Ah! I am Human, and I go
Singing the only song I know.

Second Picture

OMEN

My tree-calf books; my seven branched candle-stick;
The pine-knot's bursting heart, flame-plethoric;
My jug from old Fiesole; the rain,
And the witch-vine that darkly taps the pane.

The witch-vine signals, and the rainy night
Enters my heart; puts out its wan rush light,
Like a chill blast of fore-writ doom and tears,
Extinguishing the meaning of my years.

Then come the spectral tapping on the pane,
Counting the unmarked graves of things as vain

As that bright-bound, dumb company of books
And worthless treasure of my chamber nooks.

Let be, O witch-vine fingers! I have grown
So kindly used to living all alone.

Let be, O furtive night! And I would fain
Be unremarked of thee, O brooding rain!

Be unreminded, when the tendril taps
Keep count of years—of the remorseless lapse
Of time . . . for I must tend my fire yet,
And hear the storm, and see the window wet,

Thinking of some strange hour of frozen peace,
When the reproach of wind and rain shall cease
Thinking what Guest sits by . . . when fires wane,
And the witch-vine lies withered on the pane.

Third Picture

FANTASY .

Down the black mountain
The fairies come, I ween;
Tarrying hither,
Hurrying thither,
Grey-bright,
Phantom flight,
Winging by the glass.
Lo! spreads a green,
Leaf-lattice screen.

In the stark valley
The fairies riches feign;
They fling, they sprinkle
Tiny gems a-twinkle;
Water gems,
Flower gems
Sparkle in the grass.
Lo! in the lane,
Blood-root again.

.

On the dull houses
The fairies come to dance;
They masque, they chatter,
Elfin goblets shatter,
"Health to Spring,"
So they sing,
Laughing in the eaves.
Lo! like a lance,
See sunlight glance!

From a poor spirit
The fairies take the fears;
They soothe, they flatter,
They sing, "What matter?"
"Oh! Life is good to try!"
Lo! through my tears,
All the sky clears.

WAR POEMS

"WE MUST MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR
DEMOCRACY." 1917.

OUT on the prairies;
Where rivers flow;
On crests of mountains
The stern words glow.
"War," say the rocks.
The rails ring, "War."
From smoking chimneys
The solemn clouds pour.

War in the khaki,
War in the lace;
On youthful forehead
And stern old face.
"War!" smiles the lips,
Though the heart sobs "War."
A Nation's eyes flash
Like keen scimitar.

On all the houses
The flags are like fires.
East, West, arouses,
West, East inspires.
Light fills the banners

Light tips the poles,
The thrilled Stars and Stripes
Slowly unrolls.

Doom of the nations,
Doom of the brave.
Now it breaks o'er us,
War's bitter wave;
But we shall hold us
Face toward the light. . . .
We have enrolled us
Now for the fight!

THE MEANING

PEACE is not small white flowers
Shining on a lawn.

Peace is not youths and maidens wedded in their beauty.
Peace is not silver sandals of a stainless dawn.
Peace is the calm acceptance of heroic duty.

War is not bloody standards hung with crape.
War is not murdered men and women's sorrow.
War, for our hearts and hands, is but a Shape,
That once destroyed, leaves ghost-less the tomorrow.

THE MARCHING FAITH

I HAVE seen the men go marching,
Marching away from life;
Away from love and children
Into a bitter strife.

I have seen the men go marching
With strange high courage shod—
The old, old way of Crusaders
Men who believe in God.

Brown eyes, blue eyes, grey eyes,
Swing of the Highland kilt,
Shoulders of English lordling,
Slight form Eastern built,
Chin of a New York lawyer,
Head of a happy Greek.

I have seen the men go marching,
And I know the thing they seek.

I have seen the men go marching,
And I have no word to say;
They have read their hearts more truly
Than I in my wistful way.
They sprang to an instinct Action,
Though they scorned the path they trod.
Gold help us! we must follow—
Men who go forth for God.

Brown eyes, blue eyes, grey eyes,
Eyes that have laughed with love,
Eyes that have glowed with music,
Indian eyes that rove,
Jaw of a tall Italian,
Teeth of the French Touraine,
Faces full of the tide of life,
That will not come back again.

I have seen the men go marching,
And I know what I must do:—
Never to play them weak or false
Though the news be false or true;
Whatever the Great Endeavor
For body or brain or pen,
I must be true forever
To the faith of the Marching Men!

HOME COMING

*"They will fight until the stolen and lost and scattered children return home."

T'WILL be a great day for the Children,
The lost and scattered Children,
When they come home!
I can see now the little faces smiling,
Hear broken words, see baby hands beguiling,
And watch the dear processions straggled filing,
When the Children come.

In all the crushed, insulted, stricken households,
In all the bare and desecrated households
There will be joy.
Mothers will rouse them from their haunted sorrow,
Because their love has given the Tomorrow
A pledge, on which posterity may borrow
From girl and boy.

Mothers will rouse them from their stricken anguish,
Daring to face the future in their anguish,
Because the Children say,
"We have no part in all the hopeless killing;
We are your sacrament, your holy willing;
We are your cups for the glad, new wine-filling
Of a new Day."

T'will be a great day for the Future,
The dim and broken Future,

When the Children come!
They will bring back some clean, unlooted treasure;
New hope in life, of love a higher measure;
Unselfish aim, and purer, keener, pleasure
When they come home.

I see them dazed, the little bare feet stumbling;
I see them hasten, stunned, confused, and stumbling—
Yet unafraid.

For one great People comes to bring them gladness;
To take away the pitiful child-sadness;
To heal the infant pain and baby madness—
Another People made.

On one side wait the agonizing mothers,
The tearless, outraged, consecrated mothers,
To see them come;
The other side is lined with silent fathers,
Dead, mutilated, tortured, murdered fathers,
Sacred, elect, regenerated fathers,
Who died for Home.

And with them march the gay and ready Strangers,
The sunny, stern Americans, the Strangers,
Who bid them come.

Yea, though my eyes be blind with bitter crying,
Yet do I count worth while the fearful dying;
When dead men on a hundred red fields lying
Send the children—Home!

*Editorial Leader of New York Times, July 21st, 1917.

FOR OUR MEN

LET us keep home safe for them—
Fires, laughter and song,
The curtains close, the beds all smooth and white,
The leisure long.

Let us make good things for them—
Sweet meats and bright conserves,
Nourishing breads and all the dear delights
Hunger deserves.

Let us lift high God for them,
And like tall candles hold
The straight white lights that in the trench they knew—
Were more than gold.

Let us grow up for them,
And hold us to impassioned lofty thought—
So they shall never come to be ashamed
Of that for which they fought.

Let us all work hard for them—
For such as live and come to us once more;
To those that do not come. Ah! for those men—
Passionate love and honor, evermore!

WORLD FLOWER

ON the Stem of the World
A flower hangs blighted,
Flower that plighted
Its scarlet, uncurled,
To Pageant of Kings
And war-garlandings
And banners unfurled.

On the Stalk of the World
That flower hangs broken,
Gold pollen-token,
Nothingward hurled.
Withered its fineness
Its perfumed divineness,
Petals far whirled!

On the Branch of the World,
Bud of tomorrow,
Watered by sorrow,
Holds, all impearled,
Blossom increase,
Petals of peace
In sunlight whorled.

Ye, who walk doubting,
Care for this Flower!

Not yet its hour,
In all the shouting. . . .
Only, soft hid in the stamens, is lying
Pollen of souls that dared all the dying.
They gave the seed. Wet from our crying
Blooms the New World.

EPOCH, 1914

MORNING broke on Fécamp shore.
The sun rose from the sea.

Along the stone digue, wooden shoes
Clattered busily,
And one glad, little Norman voice
Carolled, "Sans Souci."
No care! no care! Tra-lal-la-la!"
The child's glad voice sang on;
A red-capped figure crossed the digue
To where the great boats swung
At peaceful anchor, with their nets
Spread azure in the sun.

Evening came to the little town
Where white cliffs wall the sea.
A dark bell rang, "To arms! To arms!"
The women on the quay
Choked back the tears, when Jean and Pierre
Marched forth gallantly.

And then no lift of little voice
Singing, "Sans Souci."
"Black care, Black care for home and hearth!"
For children needing bread!
Oh! the men's faces! Oh! their eyes,
That would be cold and dead
Ere the new moon, all pitiless
And smiling at her dreams,
Took her strange way of battlefields
And bloody battle-streams.

The ripe grain dies on Fécamp hills.
Sails wither at the quay.
Old people totter to the digue,
And shiver ceaselessly,
And in the pallid Gothic church
The dead and wounded see
To it that no Norman voice
Carols "Sans Souci."
Deep care, deep care, for us who try
To save and clothe and feed!
Men taunt us for our dream of Peace
Our hope of better breed!
Courage! Let faith fight down the years
Oh! let our battle be,
That the world's children some day sing
Another, "Sans Souci!"

TO AMERICANS

SOOTH, Citizens! there are few hours to dawn
Of a red day and black gun-horrored night.
The cities sleep not soundly mid, their spawn
Of golden-balled and silver-webbed light.
Tomorrow breaks the rancor and the spite—
To try our souls and test our bodies' brawn.

Americans! How stand we? Does the Dream
Still hold? Once more the robust States declare
Against the Wrong, their Right. Where millions teem,
Curious, thoughtful, fateful, do we share
The same proud purpose to defend the Scheme,
Under the flag our lofty standards bear?

Americans! Look we with fearless eyes
Loyalty? Truth? Self-sacrifice? For Her,
Our Country, now enringed by foreign spies,
Will our set faces prove our calibre—
Our Destiny all penalties incur,
So that we show us pledged and patriot-wise.

Countrymen! Rise, and let your ranks be formed
For War, or Peace in solid moveless Race!
We are not aliens, who for plunder swarmed
To cover neath the glorious Freedom-Face.
We are Souls, standing in our rightful place,
Impregnable, unswerving, unalarmed.

Brothers! defend the gates! Upon us lowers
Portentously the brooding Europe pall.
Until it comes, the fateful hour of hours,
When our World-Dream must either stand or fall—
Arm ye with Loyalty!—Hark, hear the call!
Democracy still trumpets on the towers!

PENMARCH—BRITTANY

At the time of the "Pardon," 1914.

THE Penmarch roads are sandy white;
By the old church the blue nets dry,
Stretched to the sea. The poppies bright,
Tremulous scarlet splashes high
On tawny dunes. Small wooden shoes,
Stiff snowy caps and ribbon hues
Go clattering to the market place.
'Tis Pardon-day by Maries' Grace,
(And little Bretons form a ring,
And pause to hear a Lady sing.)

What does she sing, this Lady, who
Is like embodied song, her eyes,
Clear with the light of faith where through
Looks sweetness of her soul's surmise?
What are the words she sings, her smile
So Mother-merry? What the wile
That draws the small coifs nearer, near,
And charms away the peasant fear

(Shy little Bretons keep their ring,
And stay to hear the Lady sing.)

Blue sky is part, blue sea is part;
Flax, wheat, and poppies fill the strain;
Her wide eyes deepen with her art
Like gentian flowers after rain.
'Tis World-Dream in her simple lay—
Adventure, Faith, and Love and Play.
No wonder wooden shoes keep time
To magic of her lilting rythm.
(Gay little Bretons hold their ring,
Shouting the Stranger-Lady, "Sing!")

That was one summer. Now a dirge
Breaks on that coast in bitter wail,
And news told by the ocean surge
Makes Breton-maids and mothers quail.
O holy Fires of fisher-lights,
Gleam out no more on Pardon nights!
The great red sails hang listless, torn
The empty blue nets trail forlorn.
And yet I think that little feet
Sometimes on Penmarch beaches meet,
And Penmarch children cease their play
To talk of how She sang that day,
And that once more a happy ring
Is formed to hear a Lady sing!

TO AN AMERICAN SOLDIER GOING INTO ACTION

France, August, 1918.

TODAY'S your turn to take the road of fire;
Your turn to rally at the gates of hell;
Your turn for steel and gas and blood and mire,
In shell-holes and through mazes of barbed wire,
Where men before you fought and bled and fell.

And we go with you, we, who know your face—
Its dear and merry shining, and intent;
Follow you blindly to this testing place,
Breathless, with you at this, the ultimate pace
Your fleet strong spirit takes for its ascent.

Whatever agony is yours is ours,
Whatever thing the soul of you endures;
We are the witness of your manhood's powers;
Not one of us who has your measure cowers—
What we know of you all our thought insures.

Go you, then, to the Front! May God be good!
Whatever face you raise to Him will be
The face of one, who for our Hope has stood,
Manly and resolute, whose spirit would
Be at the Front, and elsewhere could not be!



RESURGENCE

To C. L. B.

DOWN the glad morning lane a lucent veil
Of dogwood wavers like a windblown screen
Revealing vistas lit by golden trail
Of netted water-brooks that intervene
Where ferns their dewy plumage spread and preen;
Soft, myriad breaths of budding boughs exhale
On the spring world; a buoyant path of green
Makes sign by leaf and foliate flower-grail
Of exquisite re-capture of the frail
Fresh renascence of all that fair has been.
Nature survives. Lift then the haggard eyes
That watch Life on its dark death-shuttled loom!
Are ours the only forms that may not rise
Out of the Dark to unfrustrated bloom?
Nay—burst we forth out of the moment's doom,
Instinct toward suns of flowering destinies,
Lifting glad lips to deep full-breasted skies,
Branching like stars where radiant dreams resume.

GARDEN ADVENTURES

No. 1—AERIAL.

DOWN the long garden path the message came,
Borne by the breeze in a soft, wayward speed;
"My petals spread, soft burns my blossom-flame,

Yet do I know defeat and barren shame;
Dost thou then fail me in my flower-need?"

A lily-bell hung in her curving spire;
Sweet peas on pools of morning air set sail;
Womanly roses opened; did this fire,
This wordless furthering of deep desire
Waft from their midst down to the meadow-rail?

Who took the message? Did the iris there,
Masculine, bold, defy the grasses' thralls.
Mid the white lamps of daisies did one flare
Concentrate light? Did a coarse mallow dare
To think that it might answer to the call?

Up the blue garden air a wingèd ship,
Humming with hurry, takes its zig-zag way,
Hangs for a second where the poppies' tip
Shoots to the hare-bells, larkspurs, but to slip
Impatiently from honeyed bud and spray.

Then ardent pansies warmer purple glow;
Then poppies sigh for languor. Do they see
The yellow tulip near them suddenly grow
Quivering, tremulous? Does the tulip know
What meadow-flower sent the pollen-bee?

NO. 2—INVASION.

In wooded depths the lilies grew,
Nunlike in canopies of green,
Hanging white bells of paladin

In Gothic ferns beneath the yew—
A sanctuary, with the 'dew
Telling its beads by leafy screen.

And where the dandelion ranks,
Ranged Persian bright each blazing shield,
Was far away in sedgy field—
Too dense with spears of thistle hordes
To menace distant lily chords,
Or chapel treasure all unsealed;

And all day nettle airships sail,
And on the moonlight thistle swords
Leap from their scabbards, flashing towards
The priestly yew that guards the vale;
Till haughty casquéd snowdorps quail,
And violets rush borderwards.

Alas! By stealth th' invader came,
Intrenched near lily convents, where
A startled fragrance fills the air.
Green cells are pierced by nettle spike,
And dandelions, shield and pike
Ravish white bells that rang to prayer!

NO. 3—DIPLOMATS

Archippus, ambassador
To the poppy emperor,
Enters with his wings extended,
Orange, black and samite blended,

Bows o'er cups of columbines,
And at taste of royal wines
Flashes spangled semaphore
Message—"To the end of the war."

Philemon, black, green and pearl
Wavers to syringa whirl;
Lightly shod, his errant feet
Win the white pavilions sweet;
As he flits to salvia cells,
Dipping into ruby wells
His antennae, as he goes
Wig-wag—"Beauty has no foes."

Then bold Turnus, amber-fanned,
Flutters to the brilliant band;
He confers with larkspur sages,
Loiters with the pansy pages,
Tells his heraldry and crest
To the rose's burning breast;
Soon doth Turnus flutter free,
Wing-endorsing "Liberty."

Protoparce, grey and blunt,
Enters on his stealthy hunt;
Tongue protuding from his head,
Heavy wings and brutal tread,
Bulging eyes and savage thirst,
Crime's nocturnal deed he durst;
See him prowling, full of schemes,

Subtle midst the flower-dreams!
Valiant tulips, trust no more!
Close your helmets. This is war!

NO. 4—SPIES

Ask me no questions. Fireflies last night
Went over all the ground with searching light,
And only found that, where the peony-head
Hung erstwhile white, 'tis now disguised in red.

Tell me not why. I only know that since
I paused at gaze beneath the flowering quince,
A group of tents, some warlike grey, some white
Cover the ground, pitched in a single night.

No explanation gives me peace of mind,
When long battalioned caravans I find
Crossing my garden walk; and when I see
Under-ground trenches grow unceasingly.

Give me no reasons for squat forms that pass
Lurking at twilight near the ribbon grass.
Only the owl and I our vigil keep,
With, "Who goes there?" While flower kingdoms sleep.

NO 5—RENDEZVOUS

Like a sea-flower, seen through waves of night,
She spreads illumined petals, and her white
Mystical raying disk spills frankincense
From her stored sweet and balmy opulence.

Perfume of honey-flowers and purpled vines,
Odors of Eastern wood and Tuscan wines,
Sweetness compressed, smell of all blossoms blent,
Breath of all lilies in one lily's scent.

What secret doth she hold? What visions stir
At the slow calm awakening of her?
Lo! To the night is all her beauty spread,
And to the encircling dark she leans her head.

Then, who can tell what fragrant message strays
O'er dreaming trees and sleeping, leafy ways?
To what green tent her sighing languors steal?
What thrilled suspense of waiting she doth feel?

Till—Soft! A Spirit of dim-waving wings
Floats from his moonlit forest wanderings,
And by enchantment led, there plights his troth
To the night's Queen, a dew-crowned, milk-white Moth.

Now, while the garden drowns, and the cool
Of passing midnight deepens in the pool,
While all the flowers hang their heads, asleep—
Mysterious tryst two royal lovers keep.

The world rolls on; its load of hearts grown old;
And all the simple forms and feasts are cold.
But though men mock Love's slowly fading wraith,
The Forest knows,—the flowers keep their Faith.

CAMOUFLAGE

HERE is the waving river line, and here
A rail-road made
(And here float lilies white as those that were
Where Marsyas played.)

The thrilling sky is wild with wingéd planes
For air ship raid
(Yet—still steals up the hidden cirrus lanes
The Huntress Maid!)

The country road is gashed with lurid signs,
Of commerce-gods:
(Yet bitter-sweet and seeding eglantines
Hang votive pods!)

The man who walks in front of me to work
Has pointed ears
(He speaks with modern emphasis and jerk
So it appears)—

But where he toils the chimneys range their pipes
In Syrinx form
(Who knows what midnight Dancing? or what types
Of dancers swarm?)

Ah! life is practical, the Moderns say
No one escapes——"
(Ye Gods, *Who* is that smiling such a way
Among the grapes?)

HOME-SICK

HE sees the white moon climb the city skies,
Far over rank, black roofs and balconies,
And with her spectral radiance anoint
The slender lance of every steeple point.

Beneath his gaze, the brilliant streets converge,
And through the avenues the people surge.
Behind him are his walls where, numb and old
His books and pictures seem aloof and cold.

Below, he hears the gong and shout and call;
Sees the blank grief of many a plastered wall,
And bows himself upon the window sill,
In a communion motionless and still.

He leaves the temples where the merchants trade,
Leaves bright bazaar and marble collanade,
And hand and hand with the white moon he strays
Away to leafy lanes and country ways.

He vizualizes green of plashy mead
Of kneedeep grass, where lowing cattle feed,
Of orchard slope, scalloped with rosy bloom
And purple lilacs bursting into plume.

Electric beads may dot the cities plain,
But in his heart old candles flare again;
Old doors stand open, and beside old stiles
He leans, and listens as in other whiles.

So dreams; so wanders back to youth and home,
To swelling farms, to rich hill-breasted loam;
So hand in hand with the young moon he strays
Out of the city gates to the old days.

THE INTERPRETER

LAST night I heard Masfield,
Heard that voice cold as a moonlit tomb
Reading old plays and masques
And gipsy drama of old England.

I saw strange eyes flickering—sad,
Set in a face recording vigils,
Moody, unfellowed prowlings
Vague contemplations and wanderings.

I saw his face, dream-magnetic,
Pale, withheld, until he told
Stories as odd as coins in a sailor's chest;
Then mischief, like leaves danced on his brow,
And a smile like water shook on his face.

I heard the grind of creaking anchor chains
Felt ropes bruise, and felt the capstan pull,
Saw driven slanting masts, and saw the hoops
Slink as some halliard parted, and was caught.

I heard dead seamen's lips
Recounting heaps of gold in sunken ships;
I saw the dumb eyes of pathetic women,
Horribly treated by wine-frenzied brutes.

Then as the lonely, chanting, stifled voice
Droned on, I saw heart-breaking Peace,
Green happy hedges, dreaming crofts and farms,
England—before the War!

Last night I heard Masfield.
He stood downcast on a little platform,
While I careened, helm up, full canvassed
Close-hauled on happy seas.

He stood limply on a little platform
World-blind before the rows of set, still, faces,
Absorbed in his faith of one maternal word
"Beauty."

KLEPHTIC

"It would be strange if with such ample survival of the ancient polytheism in modern law there were no reminiscence of the Fauns, the Satyrs, the Pans of the olden world."—RENNELL RODD.

FAR in the mountains,
The mountains of Greece,
The cone fires burn,
Mid the pines and rocks,
And the tall shepherds wear
The curly white fleece,
And a man, with a beard,
Like a horse's mane,
Plays a small pipe,
A carved pipe,
Till the goats come straggling in,
And the bees come drowsing by,
And the olives come dropping down;
And he will be playing like that,
And they will be coming like that,
Long after our solemn mummings cease
In the mountains, the mountains of Greece.

Far in the mountains,
The mountains of Greece,
The values are strange—

The worth of a tree,
The strength of a rock,
The health of a sheep,
The length of a brook,
The dip of a bird,
The wisdom of mules.
They will offer you grapes,
Or a horn-spoon of curd,
Or wine in a cup,
Or honey and bread;
And they will keep all these values,
These dear simple values
Long after our silly values cease,
In the mountains, the mountains of Greece.

In the mountains, the mountains of Greece
They lie in a cave,
And hark to wood-sounds,
Perhaps cross themselves,
Saying, aghast!
"There be wild things,
Hidden things, dread things,
Strange things, weird things, great things."
(They quake, and are not very brave,)
But when they sleep and dream,
They dream as far as they please.
As grand and great as they please—
Of miles of red-fezzed Turks

Done to death by one Greek,
Of clouds that turn into men,
Of fountains with golden rain,
Of seas and golden ships,
Of reveling women and maids,
And hosts of little boys
Dressed in skins of fur,
Dancing and playing pipes;

And of Someone very strange,
With horns perhaps, but a smile,
A smile like hot sweet fire—
And they will be dreaming like that,
And thinking like that,
Long after our stupid teachings are dead.
Yea—Yea—Yea—
Long after we are dead,
In the mountains,
The mountains of Greece.

AT THE FEAST OF LIFE

YOU, who sit opposite and move your lips,
And toy with silver dish and graceful spoon,
And touch your wine-glass with reluctant sips—
Why do you pause, for it is afternoon.
What are your thoughts, that they should draw a mist
Before your sweet eyes, as the hours creep?
While others sing, and laugh and keep the feast,
A fast you keep.

Where dwells who now should come and feast with you?
Where fares he, years off—leagues off? Thirsts and prays
For the one sign to make his life come true?
For the one clue to lead him to your ways?
Will the feast last till he shall gain the halls?
Will fruits and wines still glow, will roses wait?
What if, in vain your tender name he calls—
Entering late?

If he should fail, I see you still serene,
Leaving the tables where the garlands die,
Passing the fountained courts that intervene
To the bright halls to bid the guests good-bye.
O, Proud! O, Pure! Where weary stairs ascend
I see you toil; your pallid candle shakes;
The wan rose at your bosom, as you bend,
Drops—faded flakes.

DEATH WITHIN DEATH

THOU wilt not smite him, Israfel?
Prone on his little couch he lies,
With the death-shadow in his eyes.
He thirsts, for what, I cannot tell.
Thou wilt not smite him, Israfel?

Thou must not smite him, Israfel.
For all his race throbs in his fame,
The sole hope of a noble name;
That small hand like a tinted shell
Holds high tradition, Israfel.

Thou canst not smite him, Israfel.
He turns his asking eyes on me.
I am his sun and moon and sea;
My life tides in his life-tides swell.
Thou canst not smite him, Israfel.

Since thou hast smitten, Israfel,
Know this, thy sword so bitter keen
Destroys a thing that might have been;
Yet, smiting him, it was as well
To kill my Soul, thou Israfel!

AT THE FLOWER-SHOW

A ROSY haze misted the air, perfume
Of flower-flesh, like flesh of white younglings,
Fresh from a cool brook-bathing; gorse and broom,
Spotted hibiscus, purple cyclamen-wings.
Nimbus and halo floated in dewy gloom;
Quirled chaliced orchids, jasmine's jewelled strings
Sprayed in warm aisles, in odorous room on room.

So quietly the human throng moved by,
It had seemed tranced, and even the dullest face
Was wistful, pensive, reverent of eye
Wandering the trellised paths with dreamy pace;
And there were soft communings, whispers shy—
Lovers at ease, seeing the leaves embrace.
Thus was it that I witnessed rivalry,
And rose-lipped envy in this blossom place.

"We are the most like you," the young girls said.
"Our bodies satin smooth have vernal dowers;
Our hair gleams gold, our cheeks are sunshine fed;
Like bud and calyx are our hidden powers."
Then was I, listening, rare astonished,
Hearing disclaimer from the iris towers,
Seeing demure, bright rose and lily head.
"You are not very like us," sighed the flowers.

Then there came women made of night and stars,
Women of dusky eye and cirrus tress
From whom men rush to wreckage and to wars,
Frenzied of their inscrutable caress.
"We are like you," they said, "competitors
For admiration; yea, in perfumed bowers"
Negation from green-hooded councilors,
"You are not like us," soft condemned the flowers.

And then there drifted by hard graceless forms,
Dull, rayless eyes, that looked, yet had no sense
Of umbelled mysteries, of disks, and norms
Of myriad seed-cells, witherings recompense;
Unapprehending, they, of shining swarms,
Of pollen flight from downcast petal showers,
Nor guessed the Spell in seed-pod multiforms.
"These surely are not like us" breathed the flowers.

Then came an old woman, worn and sorrow-wise,
Creeping in slow persistence like a vine;
And there were wells of light within her eyes;
Her hair was milk-weed white. By every sign
Of age, dried stalk of past fecundities,
She was the silvern wraith of fair Design.
"Yea, richly did I spend Life's vivid hours;
Mine has been Love and many children mine."
"Verily, Sweet, thou'rt like us," smiled the flowers!

TALISMANS

JUST now the Mother left me, and I stand
Holding her trove, a sheaf of shining curl—
All that is left of "Once a little girl,"
Alive and warm and glowing in my hand.

Like to a Seer gazing into space,
I muse upon this silken treasure, where
The coiled lights quicken, and I see the fair
Woman-ward leaning of a childish face.

I see that face gaze down the crowded years,
Quite unamazed, unchanged through all the stir
To find the deep maternal heart of Her,
Who gazes back all undeterred by tears.

I see the child eyes give their radiant speech
Once more to mother-eyes that never failed;
I see a heart that never yet has quailed
Answer those eyes over the long years' reach. . . .

The Winter sun goes down; quick chills the air
Outside my window. . . . While the West grows old,
I stand in Sanctuary, for I hold
Undying Faith, enshrined in golden hair.

SUBLIMINAL

I SHOULD like to be very lonely indeed—
Much lonlier than I am;
With humbleness, like the humbleness of a weed,
And simplicity like the sun, and no other need
But to hold me free of pose and pretence and sham.

And then I should like to think such silent things,
As only the flowers think;
I should want the whole world to be greenly a wall of
shine,
And I, leaning over, swimming in dreams of mine,
As a flower floats over a brink.

I should like to be very lonely indeed—
So the world would draw around me,
Like a green cave flower lit, echo and shadow keyed,
With a door that to naught but a path of clouds would
lead,
Or the bed in a blossoming tree.

And then I would pipe my thoughts so shyly out,
And watch them dance, dryad dressed;
I would talk to a bit of moss or an acorn sprout;
I should drink all the stars and follow the darkness out,
And bathe in the Sea of the West!

THE WALLED CITY

HERE is the mass, you see it astray and astruggle,
Deafened with noise, pushing and jestling along;
Pleasure and envy and greed, in a feverish juggle,
Outside the City of Song.

There are the Vapid, watching their hookah's smoke-
bubble;
There are the slothful, drunk at the wells of wrong;
At a scarlet booth is a Gypsy pleasing the rabble,
Outside the City of Song.

Here are the credulous, cheated to death by a thimble;
Here are the hungry stumbling on to the gong;
Here stands a lover grasping a treacherous symbol,
Outside the City of Song.

Whirl of pretense, of gilding, of tinsel, of glitter;
Strange that its patter and laughter can keep up so long;
Echo on echo of mocking and cat-call and twitter,
Outside the City of Song.

Long is the road, that they travel and know not the
turning;
Black is the pit at the end, and the fear and the wrong;
But bitterest, blackest, their last inescapable yearning
For the lost City of Song.

While in its courts, where the fountains leap up to the
zenith,
Dreamers and poets and lovers go all the day long,
Dazzled, and raptured with pondering all that it meaneth,
To dwell in the City of Song.

ON LILY STREET, NANTUCKET

ON Lily Street, where drowsy crickets hum,
And two and two the summer lovers come,
Straying so happily their island paths,
Where the white candle flickers at a low-hung door,
I see soft hooded figures cross a bit of moor—
Hurrying, eager, they—
To hear you play.

Now as the moonlight slants on whitened roof,
And old New England still gives austere proof
Of bygone things in narrowed window glass,
The guests sit quiet in the panelled rooms
Content with half lights and half tinted glooms,
Because they know that they—
Shall hear you play.

And I who lean upon the leafy sill
Feel moonlight dreaming change to vagrom thrill,
And looking forth as on some lantern screen,
See, flitting o'er the stark old house-wall nigh,
Soft shadows of your vivid melody.
So—in an eerie way
I hear you play.

Till, on the house wall opposite my place
I see wild Carmen's bright poinsettia face;
I see Grieg's "Day break," streaming up the sky.

Upon the old Nantucket houses blank
I watch Tannhouser's Pilgrims climb in solemn rank,
—Past windows grey—the while you play.

Long on the bare screen grieves the "Butterfly."
Then, as her Oriental sorrows die,
Forth doth the "Earl King" ride;
The Schumann "Warum" drops its pensive leaves,
Macdowell's "Sea" its toppling billow heaves,
Chaminades, "Dancing Fay"
Trips, as you play.

But ere your noble hands have given their gift
Down on the town, the bells of Curfew drift,
The candle gutters at the low-hung door.
Yet, see; from this low window where I muse,
All Lily Street doth spectrally suffuse,
Glimmers each tiny pane.
You call it "moonlight," but I think that they
The old Nantucketers, long passed away
Peer forth to hear you play!

THE "BLIND" ROAD, NANTUCKET

IF you would find
Peace, and a lightened load,
And wells of delicate, salt, sweet-fern air,
And tranquil lines around you every where,
Follow the "blind" Rut Road.

It leads to liberties of yellow gorse,
To secret heather and to banks of bay;
It winds along the ocean, and its course
Is wet with wild sea-spray.
It leads along the swamps, where honey-ball
Hangs scented globes, where clethra scatters sweet,
By holly hedge, where pheasants thread the tall
Indigo plant, or flying sea-gulls meet.

It leads away from every fret and jar,
From everything that hurts and stings and tries;
Through green dwarf-pines, and hills of cinnebar,
Marshaling grasses up to windswept skies.

If you would find
Rest and forgetfulness and all things new,
Take the Rut Road, and it will bring to you
All dear forgotten things, things you see through,
But that this road holds sacred, being "blind."

THE END OF THE SEASON—NANTUCKET

THE hotel building sees its doom, aghast,
And all its windows fix in sullen stare,
For no girl-voices ring on sunset air,
And no bright-breasted youth goes speeding past.
The latticed roses and the phlox have cast
Their petals upon paths where lovers dreamed,
And grey old streets, where gauzy figures streamed,
Settle to lamp-lit quietness at last.

Yet there is endless romance on the moor;
The hawks o'er wine-red hollows stretch their wings,
Wild ducks loop Autumnward in ranging strings,
And swallows balance round time-silvered door;
High looms the bluff in castle like contour,
And wear the beach the full white breasts of dunes
Nourish sky-silence, while the sea communes
With shells, a-quiver to the foam's allure.

MOVING MILESTONES—NANTUCKET

MIDNIGHT, Black, and a wild sea of stars,
A gold-white surf of stars whose sparkling foam
Breaks into waves on occult ether bars,
Where star-tides have their deep eternal home.
All night the solemn Wonder sweeps me by;
Arcturus, Vega, Spica cross the sky
On one fixed path, by laws that do not change,
Unfailing while all other laws derange.

Midnight, black; and a wild horde of fears,
The brains half-knowledge and the hearts fierce pride
Questions me cold and distant to my tears;
Yet on my thought the old true Visions glide—
Tenderness, Truth, Unselfishness; their lights
Travel the wastes and glimmer on the heights.
So may I keep my way, whose avatars
Gave me a path that leads beyond the Stars.

SOURCE

"If Beauty grows old, share it before it be gone, and if it abides, why fear to give away what thou dost keep?"

BY the Alpheus, where the reeds are blown
Aslant by winds that flick the tawny current,
There runs a path that is all overgrown
With low dwarf oaks and many a vine deterrent,
Which leads past grain and broad mulberry trees
To soft Olympia's cool sanctities.

There, where the cypress makes a trancelike shade,
White pillars gleam, and floors of old mosaic,
Hold gemmy moss and tender bud and blade,
In hints of bygone Pyrrhic and Trochic—
In those fresh petal rhythms which Nature keeps
Like poems living where the poet sleeps.

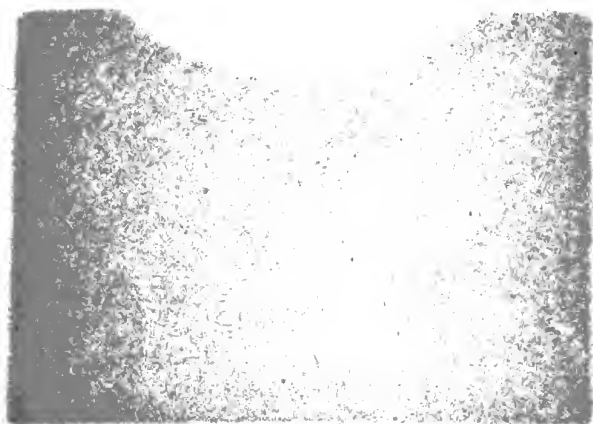
And all about the place the Games go on.
The buoyant clouds fly swift to wingéd races;
One tall fir gives an Ode to Marathon,
And down the temple paths young sunlight paces;
And that strange rare Perfection, that is Greece,
Here holds its happy spell of calm and Peace.

Dreaming Olympia, whose footpaths take
Their secret way to temple and by column,
Thou art so far away. The blue daybreak
Is all war-reddened now, and the Vow solemn;
Yet, incandescent in those aisles of pines,
Thy same still tranquil beauty grayly shines.

And this is well, for after all the pain,
And all the hate, and all the human blunder,
How we shall need to bathe us once again
In baths of pure Greek beauty! Ah! the wonder
Hellas has ever held! Shall we not need
That wonder to rebuke our shame and greed?

Sylvan Olympia, keep the untouched dream
For years to come and for a noble future!
Bind all thy classic pathways to one Theme
Of Soaring Youth and starward high adventure!
So shall thy dusks, when wistful feet come roaming;
Mean always—world-pain healed, and spirits homing.





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